

providing a platform for new interpretation and reinterpretation, the editors took the first step towards reaching their goal: to “encourage further research and scholarship” and to “inspire scholarly discussions and debates” (p. xxi). The different chapters of the book offer new insights, open doors for discussions and constitute important contributions to the history of the Balkans and the Cold War.

**Tobias Rupprecht: Soviet Internationalism after Stalin. Interaction and Exchange between the USSR and Latin America during the Cold War, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2015, 334 p.**

Reviewed by  
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The history of the relations between the Soviet Union and Latin America has so far been an understudied topic. Political scientists of the Cold War era, who occasionally studied these relationships, concentrated on the Soviet-Cuban ties and put their spotlight on military and political cooperation, on the activities of Latin American communist parties or on the writings of Soviet experts of Latin America. The political, ideological and military dimensions clearly overshadowed the cultural one. As a result, the extremely rich history of Soviet-Latin American cultural encounters, literary and cinematic connections,

scientific and student exchanges, and mutual perceptions constituted a black box. Tobias Rupprecht dug into these relationships and filled these enormous gaps. His book restores Latin America's prominent place in Soviet cultural life and gives the Soviet-Latin American relations the place they deserve in contemporary international history.

Rupprecht arguably starts his story with Nikita Khrushchev's Thaw and the Soviet come-back into the international cultural arena after the end of a period of isolationism. He is however fully aware of the historical background, Comintern's role, the very early Latin American interest in the Soviet experiment, as well as of the impact and legacy of the Spanish Civil War. Stalin's death, the emergence of the Third World and the Cuban Revolution set the stage for Moscow's new cultural policy towards Latin America. This new international cultural policy and the ensuing Soviet-Latin American romance is what Rupprecht, following Akira Iriye, calls “Soviet internationalism.” The use of the Iriye definition of internationalism, in the sense of a movement to promote cultural and scientific cooperation, along with the Soviet one, required explanation not less because Iriye used this term for worldwide processes and agendas often led by nongovernmental actors. More importantly, the Soviets themselves, notoriously, used the term internationalism differently, either as class-based namely proletarian solidarity in the Marxian tradition or as nation-based international solidarity, that is, support to the oppressed colonial and semi-colonial nations following Lenin's cardinal amendment of internationalism. Even if Rupprecht explains at the intro-

duction that he opts for the Iriye definition without dismissing the Soviet one, it is sometimes not very clear in the text which one between these two very different definitions is at play.

This terminological remark notwithstanding, the rich content and the fine analysis are by far more important. Chapter 1 provides a wonderful account of the Soviet self-representation towards both Latin America and the Soviet public. Rupprecht retraces the creation of Soviet scientific and cultural institutions related to Latin America, without losing sight of similar developments on the other side of the connection. The 1957 World Youth Festival in Moscow set the stage for an encounter without historical precedent between Soviet citizens and youngsters from Latin America. Soviet media dramatically increased their activity cultivating a new image of the USSR both in the Soviet Union and in Latin America. This image emphasized the Soviet technological achievements, the development of the Central Asian and Caucasian regions and the peaceful international policy of the Soviet Union, whereas it omitted almost all references to communist ideology.

Chapter 2 digs deeper into Soviet cultural life and shows the tremendous impact of Latin America on Soviet culture. On the one hand, against the background of the Cuban Revolution, revolutionary romanticism became widespread. On the other hand, images of an exotic and mythological Latin America were produced by Soviet writers and filmmakers and consumed by Soviet citizens, whose yearning for escape found in Latin America an ideal distant paradise. Escapism and folklorism notwithstanding, these images were positive

and their consumption testified to the Soviet citizen's sympathy for Latin America. Latino music, films and travelogues written by Soviet authors also fostered the Soviet public's fascination with Latin America.

Chapter 3 turns the spotlight on the Latin American intellectuals, journalists, social and political actors who visited the USSR and analyzes their travelogues and accounts. Here Rupprecht does not confine himself to the leftist intellectuals, more often than not of middle or upper class background, who had spent much time in the West and who, ultimately, turned their back on the USSR in the 1960s or even earlier. He also examines the accounts of liberal and conservative visitors, who often extolled the discipline and the morality of the Soviet society, as well as the writings of non-white travelers of lower class background. Contrary to the other "groups," the visitors of lower class background were much more likely to comment positively on the standards of living and on the social development in the USSR. By including all these diverse groups and by paying attention to the various social and national backgrounds, Rupprecht provides a fair picture that goes much beyond any conventional narrative on the disillusionment of leftist intellectuals.

Chapter 4 provides a comprehensive picture of the Latin American students' migration and experiences in the USSR. As Rupprecht reminds, the overwhelming majority of students studied either at the Patrice Lumumba Peoples' Friendship University or at technological institutes and medical schools in Moscow, Kiev and other big cities, where they received a very good training. Combining archival sources and interviews Rupprecht provides an

*Alltagsgeschichte* of the students' life, from their adaptation to Russia's cold winters to their cultural activities and trips abroad. As the recollections of the students also confirm, with few exceptions, their experiences were very positive. Students from all backgrounds were grateful for the scholarships the Soviet Union provided them, which enabled them to receive higher education and in most cases to embark on very good careers.

Chapter 5 examines the biographies, international trajectories, political and scientific activity of the major Soviet specialists of Latin America. These experts, Rupprecht reminds, held various on Latin America and produced academic works of high quality. There were serious debates among them as well as between them and foreign scholars, and some of them overtly opposed the CPSU line and advocated for more support to radical movements. When it comes to the difficult question as to whether they influenced the CPSU decision-making, Rupprecht shows that some of them occupied key positions in the party's International Department or the Soviet government.

Overall Rupprecht's book, which in terms of content and questions addressed is like five PhD dissertations into one book, provides an extremely rich and fascinating account of the relationships between the Soviet Union and Latin America. The book makes the case that Soviet internationalism with regards to Latin America both in the Iriye definition and in the Soviet one was not empty words and that fascination with Latin America was widespread in the USSR. As a result, there was a huge "market" in the USSR for cultural items related to Latin America. Sometimes

we would like to learn more about the royalties Soviet and Latin American authors received, on the question of mixed couples and intermarriage, or on the political and ideological confrontations between Latin American leftists and Soviet hosts, but one could hardly expect from an author to do more than what Tobias Rupprecht did. The book is an outstanding contribution to the history of the USSR, of Latin America, and of the global Cold War.

**Hans-Heinrich Nolte: *Kurze Geschichte der Imperien. Mit einem Beitrag von Christiane Nolte*, Wien: Böhlau, 2017, 505 S.**

Rezensiert von  
Klemens Kaps, Linz

Die in der Geschichtswissenschaft seit mehr als zehn Jahren zu beobachtende Hinwendung zur Erforschung von Imperien hat in den vergangenen Jahren eine beachtliche theoretische und methodologische Verfeinerung erfahren. Ausgehend von zu Standardwerken aufgestiegenen Arbeiten wie jene von Herfried Münkler<sup>1</sup> oder Jane Burbank und Federic Cooper<sup>2</sup> hat sich ein Forschungsstrang etabliert, der Imperien als im weitesten Sinn politischen Ordnungsrahmen auf die Agenda der Geschichtswissenschaft gesetzt hat. Insbesondere für die Globalgeschichte ist diese Diskussion relevant, erlauben doch Imperien wie keine andere politische Organisations-